

Employee Experience Maturity Path

How does your EX measure up?

A range of factors influence how organisations approach employee experience – sector, strategy, culture and operational model all play a part. Despite the variables, the same core elements underpin how organisations successfully define and deliver an effective employee experience – one built on the needs of the organisation, the work, and, of course, the people. Research for the book *Employee Experience by Design – How to Create An Effective EX for Competitive Advantage* (second edition, 2024) defines these elements as: **Focus, Mindset, Involvement and Impact.**

The combination of capability and practice in each of these areas reflect how mature an organisation’s approach is to EX – and how effective the resulting employee experience is.

Use the EX Maturity Measure to plot the maturity of your EX approach – and identify steps to build its effectiveness



The four elements of the EX Maturity Path

Capability and practice in each of these four areas reflect the maturity of your EX approach and determine how effective the resulting employee experience is likely to be.



An effective EX isn't just about where you put your time and energy, but how you make that decision.

An EX mindset changes the dialogue from processes / programmes, and people as resources, to individual needs and designed experiences.

An effective EX needs the right people actively collaborating, sponsoring and championing it at the right level and the right time.

Being clear on how you will measure and evaluate the impact of your EX strategy ensures you can deliver an effective EX – and sustainably.



Based on initial contributions from the EX Design Club, contributors to the first edition of *Employee Experience by Design*.

The EX Maturity Path and EX Maturity Measure are brought to you by Emma Bridger and Belinda Gannaway, co-authors of *Employee Experience by Design – How to Create an Effective EX for Competitive Advantage*. Pick up a copy to discover practical steps you can take to improve all areas of your employee experience.



Mapping the four elements against the stages of maturity

Forming

Performing

Transforming

WHAT'S HAPPENING FOR EMPLOYEES

"My experience has been really inconsistent – every step seems disjointed. I see colleagues in other teams having a very different experience to me."

"On the whole my experience here feels pretty joined up, with some real high points along the way."

"Even before I joined, my experience has been in tune with the brand promise and perfectly joined up."

EFFECTIVENESS OF APPROACH



Focus, Mindset, Involvement and Impact at each stage of Maturity Path

WHAT'S HAPPENING BEHIND THE SCENES

Experiments by pioneers and small groups
Our approach is disjointed, but we can still fix things in the experience. We experiment with new ways of doing things and learn all the time. We recognise that our audience is not a single group, but made up of disparate individuals. We only have basic people data and employee feedback to work with. We focus on quick wins and move fast with limited data. We often start with solutions rather than deeply understanding the problem.

Work begins on simple employee journeys
Our approach is defined and we are clear on how we collaborate. We're developing our skills and the tools we use. For example, we have summaries of our employee end users to understand and meet their goals (basic personas). And we've started journey mapping to plot the steps and interactions our people have in relation to an aspect of their time with us, eg onboarding or becoming a first-time manager. We work with one team at a time to identify and work on the most critical moments in that journey.

Multi-functional teams work on complex journeys
We work and activate on several dimensions at once, often complex areas, such as culture or equipment. These are not just set pieces like onboarding. We focus on complex employee journeys owned by multiple teams. We understand what drives behaviours and work on multiple levels – what our people think, feel and do. We have detailed summaries of our audiences, built on data, that include nuances and attributes. We use these personas to tailor experiences for our people, and share them across the enterprise.

FOCUS

Our focus is reactive
We...

- Want quick wins, so focus on small, discreet things to fix
- Rarely have data to validate assumptions
- Build alliances and trust by redesigning processes prioritised by HR and other departments

Our focus is proactive
We...

- Are proactive in deciding what to work on and base these decisions on strategic imperatives
- Demonstrate rigorous thinking and use a range of factors to validate decisions

Our focus is strategic
We...

- Drive organisational performance with an EX strategy clearly focused on organisational goals
- Have a research approach that generates insights to create better solutions for employees
- Have a clear methodology for prioritising, using data, insights and measurement

MINDSET

Our mindset is from HR – the language of EX is limited to a few early pioneers
We prioritise...

- Processes and programmes first, people second
- What we do to employees
- People as resources

Our mindset is about the products we deliver
We prioritise...

- Emotions – they are the material we work on
- Employee journeys
- Moments that matter – significant points in a journey that have a disproportionate impact (positive or negative)

Our mindset is about experience and the employee as a customer
We prioritise...

- People and their unique needs and motivations
- The richness of the experiences we create for different people
- EX outcomes, not just the tactics we use to achieve them

INVOLVEMENT

Involvement in EX initiatives is ad hoc and informal
Those involved in EX initiatives include...

- Process owners struggling with a problem
- Local EX enthusiasts running side-of-desk projects alone or in small teams
- Employee end users collaborating on solving problems

We have a small, dedicated EX team with some collaborators beyond
Collaborators include...

- Journey owners
- Individual teams empowered to improve EX and act on feedback
- Employee end users
- Managers who understand their role in creating a great EX (and who are supported to deliver it)

There is dedicated, senior level EX ownership and leadership
We...

- Face no barriers getting the right people involved
- Have an established sponsor user programme to quickly find the right employee collaborators
- Embed EX design skills and ways of working in teams beyond the EX team

IMPACT

We impact discrete parts of the employee experience and measurement is patchy
Our approach to measurement means we...

- Can't always evaluate the impact of our efforts

We create impact in a systematic and joined up way
Our approach to measurement means we...

- Draw clear links between EX investments, business goals and metrics
- Demonstrate links between EX and our NPS, CSAT and CES

We measure impact in tangible business outcomes
Our approach to measurement means we...

- Demonstrate tangible business outcomes in performance, productivity, attraction, retention, engagement and more
- Demonstrate cost and time reductions, lower tech investments, simplification and more

Use the EX Maturity Measure to plot the maturity of your EX approach – and identify steps to build its effectiveness

EX Maturity Measure



Use the EX Maturity Measure questions below to understand where you sit on the EX Maturity Path. For each item below you'll see two opposite statements. Decide where your approach fits between the two statements to give you a score. You can use the EX Maturity Measure in a couple of ways.

01 Use the EX Maturity Measure to understand your overall EX maturity

How to do it:
Answer all of the questions in the EX Measure.
Add up your scores for all of the questions and then divide by 15.
This will give you a score between 1 and 10.

- What your score means:**
- A score of **1-3** means your approach is **Forming** and in the early stages of maturity – the experience is likely to be inconsistent.
 - A score of **4-7** means your approach is **Performing** and more developed – you are likely to be delivering higher levels of consistency and significant standout moments within the overall experience.
 - A score of **8-10** means your approach is **Transforming** – you are likely to be delivering a stand-out experience for most employees that is joined up and in line with the brand promise.

What to do about it:
Review the elements where you scored less well and see the improvement suggestions on the final page.

02 Use the EX Maturity Measure to understand the maturity of your EX approach in each of the four elements

How to do it:
Answer all of the questions in each of the four elements.
Add up your scores for each of the elements.
Divide your total score for each element by 3.
This will give you a number between 1 and 10.

- What it means:**
- A score of **1-3** in any element means your approach in this area is **Forming** and in the early stages of maturity.
 - A score of **4-7** in any element means your approach in this area is **Performing** and more developed.
 - A score of **8-10** in any element means your score is **Transforming** and more likely to have a significant impact on the employee experience.

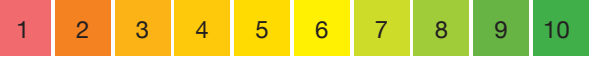
What to do about it:
Review the elements where you scored less well and see the improvement suggestions on the final page.

Start here to understand your overall EX maturity by answering all of the questions

Big picture measures

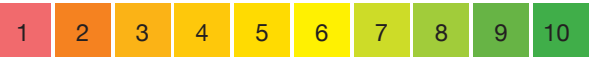
What's happening for employees

Considering the data we have on our employees' experience, their experience can be rated as poor



Considering the data we have on our employees' experience, their experience can be rated as very good

The experience our people have is inconsistent and disjointed



The experience our people have is intentionally designed and joined up

What's happening behind the scenes

We jump straight to the solutions to improve our EX, basing them on our assumptions about what will work rather than on data



We spend time understanding the experiences we are designing from the perspective of our people, using insights to inform our solutions

Total big picture score

EX Maturity Measure



Measuring maturity in the four elements

Focus

Our focus is reactive, looking to fix experiences we know are broken



We have an EX strategy that ensures our work is aligned with the company strategy and goals

We only have basic data about our people to work with (eg employee survey)



We have rich data and insights which enable us to stand in the shoes of the people we are designing for, eg behavioural employee personas

We focus on the quick wins, using basic data to redesign processes prioritised by HR



We use data and insights to prioritise experiences to work on that have the greatest impact on our people and business strategy

Total Focus score

Mindset

We still talk about 'human resources' rather than people, and think programmes and projects first



We talk about the needs and motivations of our people first and spend time getting curious about them

We fix processes that are broken, regardless of the scale of the impact on our people



Our approach is genuinely human centred and we view our employees as our customers, designing experiences tailored for their needs

We create one-size-fits-all processes and programmes for the many



We design experiences based on the needs of individuals

Total Mindset score

Involvement

Those involved with improving EX tend to be limited to subject matter experts from the people team



We get the right people involved with improving EX, no matter which part of the organisation they sit in

It can be a challenge to get buy in from senior stakeholders to focus on EX



We have senior leadership buy-in and sponsorship which makes it easy to make progress

We work as service providers, supporting people that come to us with problems that need to be fixed with little consideration of the right people that need to be involved



We proactively involve the right people at the right time to improve all elements of the experience

Total Involvement score

Impact

It's difficult to evaluate the impact of our efforts



We have a robust measurement approach to evaluate the impact of the work we do

The measures we use tend to be based on outputs (eg was the experience a good one), rather than desired outcomes (eg have we reduced new hire attrition in the first 6 months)



We agree outcome measures, and use them to demonstrate the impact of our work on the organisation

Measurement of EX is a snapshot (eg a milestone survey and not ongoing) – it is hard to measure the impact of efforts to improve EX



We continually measure EX and can demonstrate ROI through how EX impacts business objectives in performance, productivity, attraction, retention, engagement and more

Total Impact score

My total score (including scores from big picture, Focus, Mindset, Involvement and Impact)

Divide your total score by 15 to give you you a number between 1 and 10

- 1-3 indicates your approach to EX is **Forming**
- 4-7 indicates your approach to EX is **Performing**
- 8-10 indicates your approach to EX is **Transforming**

How to boost your EX maturity



What to do to improve your maturity in each element

A vast range of programmes, practices, tools and human interactions impact the employee experience. The needs of your people, the organisation and the work will be different and so what it takes to develop a more mature approach will be unique to you and your context. With that in mind, take the suggestions below as things to consider, rather than a definitive roadmap.

Focus

Maturity in the Focus element means your people are more likely to have a consistent and joined up approach across their time with you. No matter which team, department or location they are in the experience will feel distinctive and seamless.

If you have scored low in this area, you might want to:

- Explore the weaker areas of your EX and consider the impact of this weakness of your organisational goals.
- Use this to prioritise your EX activities, rather than always being in reactive mode.
- Get in the habit of always testing your EX assumptions by using employee data to validate your ideas.
- Generate new employee insights where you don't already have them.

Mindset

A mature EX Mindset shifts the focus from people as resources, and processes and programmes, to individual needs and experience design.

If you have scored low in this area, you might want to:

- Change the language – ditch dehumanising language such as resources, staff etc, and instead talk about people.
- Experiment with new tools to help you better understand your people's lived experience – journey mapping is a great place to start.
- Create and start to play with employee personas (make them behavioural, rather than role-based to really explore employee needs and motivations).

Involvement

Maturity in the Involvement element means it's easy to get the right people involved in designing and delivering an improved experience. The grade, department or role people occupy are in no way a barrier to make this happen.

If you have scored low in this area you might want to:

- Find a senior level sponsor for the work you do.
- Create a group of advocates from across your organisation to champion EX (different teams, levels and roles).
- Spot opportunities to bring people together to collaborate on improving the EX of your people.
- Upskill 'EX Custodians' (eg HR, internal comms, engagement, talent acquisition etc) with EX design skills.

Impact

Being able to evidence the Impact of EX on tangible business outcomes signifies a mature approach to EX.

If you have scored low in this area you might want to:

- Get clear on the objectives and goals of the EX you're designing. Clarity at this point makes it easier to understand how to measure the impact.
- Prioritise outcomes as well as outputs. Think about the impact on the business, not just the experience itself.
- Keep your finger on the pulse of the experience your people are having, rather than relying on 'snapshot' measures.



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